

ASK THE INSPECTOR

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I've heard a lot in the news lately about a new energy retrofit incentive program that will help me save money on my renovations. What is the ecoENERGY retrofit incentive and how would I benefit?



The new ecoENERGY Retrofit Program is a federal program that was unveiled in January 2007 by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan). This initiative is a focused mix of information and incentives targeted to improve energy efficiency in housing, buildings and industrial processes. It also includes a new initiative called ecoENERGY

Retrofit – Homes, a residential energy assessment service.

Under this new program, Canadian homeowners can receive a federal grant for undertaking the recommended energy efficiency improvements on their home while helping to contribute to a cleaner environment. Participating

homeowners will receive a personalized checklist of items that highlights both the best upgrades and the eligible incentive associated with each one. The checklist is developed during a professional evaluation by a licensed energy evaluator. Homeowners can expect grants that could defray costs associated with recommended retrofits such as the installation of new or additional insulation, the purchase of an energy efficient furnace or the upgrade of Energy Star® doors and windows.

How will this benefit me?

Peace of mind

NRCan-licensed energy advisors provide unbiased advice on how to improve your home's energy use. The service is also quality-assured by the Government of Canada to ensure the integrity of the residential energy assessment service.

Understanding your options

The residential energy assessment service provides a thorough basement-to-attic assessment of your home's



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energy use. The energy advisor's written report will help you to plan retrofits that will improve the energy efficiency of your home or multi-unit residential building.

Proof of upgrades

After you have completed your energy upgrades, experts will provide you with a second (post-retrofit) evaluation and a new energy efficiency rating label that indicates your home's improved energy use.

Grants toward your retrofit expenses

Only homes that have had pre- and post-retrofit evaluations from an NRCAN-licensed energy advisor are eligible for grants. The grant amount is based on each of the recommended retrofits you have completed and the relative impact the retrofits have on the energy efficiency of your home. For instance, replacing your gas furnace with an ENERGY STAR® qualified furnace will achieve a high level of energy savings and will therefore have a bigger grant value. Your energy advisor can suggest the retrofits that are your best options.

Taking action to alleviate climate change

The use of energy from fossil fuels is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Canadians are being encouraged to use less energy. Make your contribution to help protect our environment by using the residential energy assessment service.

Who should consider having this evaluation done?

Does your home have comfort problems such as drafts, cold spots and frosted windows?

Find the source of these problems and get information about repairing them.

Renovating or retrofitting?

Energy advisors use state-of-the-art evaluation practices and can advise on the best modern techniques and types of products.

Upgrading your heating and cooling system?

Retrofitting heating and cooling systems can provide ongoing savings year after year after year.

Selling your house?

After you've made energy efficiency upgrades and comfort improvements to your home, the energy efficiency rating label shows potential buyers how much you've improved your home's energy efficiency and how it compares to other homes in your area.

What does the evaluation involve?

The evaluation includes:

- a detailed energy evaluation of your home carried out by a licensed energy advisor
- a "blower door" test to find air leaks
- a printed report that shows where your energy dollars are being spent and what you can do to improve your home's energy efficiency
- an energy efficiency rating label that shows you how energy efficient your home is compared with others in your region

Only homes that have been evaluated using NRCAN's residential energy assessment service will be eligible for a grant.

Is an ecoENERGY evaluation the same as a home inspection?

No. A home inspection involves a thorough visual examination of the overall physical conditions of a

home's structure inside out, from roof to foundation, including reporting on components such as mechanical systems and building envelope.

The scope of an ecoENERGY evaluation includes data collection regarding certain building envelope conditions as they relate to energy efficiency and provides a report

How do I apply?

Your energy advisor will apply for the grant on your behalf after you have completed the recommended energy efficiency retrofits and your home has been re-assessed. Your advisor will prepare the paperwork for you to sign and will be able to tell you exactly how much you can expect to receive. Your energy advisor will then forward your application to NRCAN.

A table of retrofits has been established to show the payment for the completion of each recommended upgrade. The grant amount has been determined by the relative effectiveness of that particular upgrade in reducing energy or water use, and not directly on the cost of the upgrade, which will vary depending on location, local pricing and labour costs, size of house, etc. There is a minimum of \$300 in retrofit expenditures is required to apply for the grant. A grant application must be submitted to NRCAN no later than 18 months after the date of the pre-retrofit evaluation. You can expect to receive your cheque within 90 days of your follow-up evaluation.

For more information, visit the Natural Resources Canada website at <http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca>

Contact Us: